# A Century Of Christian Progress

## ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
## BELLEFONTE, PENNSYLVANIA

# A Century Of Christian Progress

# 1837--1937

# CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

## OCTOBER 2 and 3, 1937

## Centennial Program

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| October 2nd— | 8:00 P. M. | Reception for all members of the Parish and their friends. |
| October 3rd— | 8:00 A. M. | Corporate Communion of all present and former members of the Parish. Bishop Brown, celebrant. |
| | 11:00 A. M. | Confirmation and Anniversary Sermon by Bishop Brown. |

# BISHOP OF HARRISBURG

THE RT. REV. WYATT BROWN

## PRESENT RECTOR OF THE PARISH

THE REV. ROBERT JAMES SUDLOW

# Parish Directory--1937

| | |
|---|---|
| Bishop | The Rt. Rev. Wyatt Brown, D. D., Litt, D., LL. D. |
| Rector | The Rev. Robert James Sudlow, B. A. |

## *WARDENS*

Col. W. Fred Reynolds

Mr. Hugh M. Quigley

## *VESTRYMEN*

Wilbur H. Baney
James I. Gray
Thomas J. Lamb
George E. McClellan
George I. Purnell
Harry Raymond

Major H. Laird Curtin, Clerk

## *CHURCH SCHOOL, SENIOR DEPT.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Superintendent | Mr. Calvin C. Purnell |
| Secretary | Miss Loretta Cox |
| Treasurer | Miss Nina Lamb |
| Pianist | Miss Jean McGarvey |

## *CHURCH SCHOOL, JUNIOR DEPT.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Superintendent | Mrs. Robert J. Sudlow |
| Secretaries | Messrs. William McNichols and G. I. Purnell, Jr. |
| Treasurer | Miss Nina Lamb |
| Pianist | Mrs. E. K. Stock |

## *THE WOMAN'S AUXILIARY*

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Miss Margaret Cook, Ph. D. |
| Secretary-Treasurer | Mrs. Earl S. Orr |

## *THE ALTAR GUILD*

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Mrs. Wilbur Baney |

## *THE CHOIR*

| | |
|---|---|
| Organist and Director | Mrs. Paul S. Beaver |

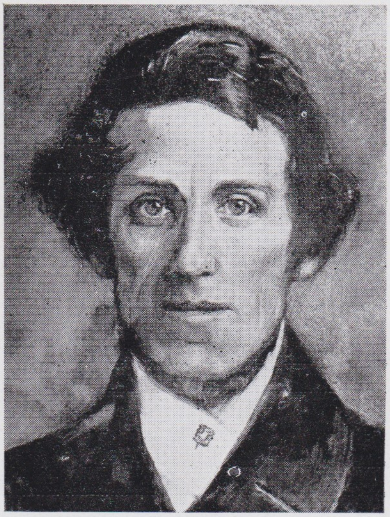
## *ORDER OF ST. VINCENT*

| | |
|---|---|
| Chaplain | The Rector |
| Director | Mr. Calvin C. Purnell |

## *GIRLS' CLUB*

| | |
|---|---|
| Advisor | Mrs. Hugh M. Quigley |

FIRST RECTOR OF THE PARISH



THE REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON NATT

# Centennial Sermon

(By the REV. ROBERT J. SUDLOW, Rector)

"Let us now praise famous men." Ecclesiasticus 44:1.

From the dawn of history and the development of man every generation has admitted the debt it owes to preceding generations. That was true of the most primitive savages of long ago, for the very gods that the savages worshipped were formerly men who had done great things for their race. The bold, adventurous individual who had learned to use and control fire became the fire-god of the tribe and his memory and human traits were enshrined in the worship of him years after. Today we do not deify and worship men of previous ages who have done great and wonderful things for the human race, but we do honor them and admit the debt we owe them for their achievements. This we find not only in the Church but in the secular world as well. In the Church we honor and respect the saints of the Old and New Testaments and some who achieved sainthood after the first few centuries. The world proclaims a certain man or woman as the outstanding person of a century, and occasionally sets forth one day of the year when that person is to be honored, and declares that day a holiday. We find that this same debt is admitted in the fields of medicine, science and warfare; in fact in every field of human endeavor.

But today we are more concerned with the debt we owe to men and women who have made possible the Century of Christian Progress here in Bellefonte which was ushered in when the Rev. George Washington Natt came as the first rector of this parish 100 years ago.

In the spring of 1825 the Rev. Mr. Piggott, the rector of St. Mark's Church, Lewistown, came to Bellefonte to visit two sisters who had moved here from York, Pa. Here he found several families who were members of the Episcopal Church and held a service for them in Mr. Armour's cabinet shop. For the next three years he made occasional visits to Bellefonte and thus St. John's church was started. In 1828 the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania recognized the importance of the work in Bellefonte and appointed a missionary to take charge of the church here as well as the churches in Philipsburg and Huntingdon. But traveling long distances across the mountains in all sorts of weather did not make for regular services. In spite of this the mission grew and in 1831 the first vestry was organized, and a year later plans were made for the erection of a church. In the same year, however, ill health caused the Rev. Adderly to resign his missionary work and for the next three years St. John's was without a rector and regular services.

Early in June 1837 Bishop Onderdonk appointed the Rev. George Washington Natt, a recent graduate of the General Theological Seminary in New York City, as rector of St. John's, and on August 11, 1837, the Rev. Mr. Natt, still in deacon's orders, came to Bellefonte. Within a year a church was built on Jail Hill, and within another year the parish was formally admitted into union with the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Too much praise cannot be given the work of our first rector. He found the church weak and struggling; he left it strong and growing. Constantly he had to defend the position and teaching of the church, and in a time of strong denominational prejudice he often resorted to public meetings to explain and defend the teachings of his church and to break down prejudice. He was ever loyal to the teachings of the church and in later years one of his brother clergymen said, "Brother Natt does surely take a man to Christ, but he takes him through the Church."

While the work in Bellefonte claimed his first interest and energy, the Rev. Mr. Natt was not unmindful of the missionary needs of the Church, and often we find him conducting services on weekdays in Clearfield, Morrisdale, Lewistown, Lock Haven, Bown's Mills, and Philipsburg. He founded the work at Lock Haven and due to his efforts the defunct parish at Philipsburg was revived and a new church building was erected. Always a frail man and for many years very sickly, Mr. Natt did everything in his power to maintain his appointed services. Often he would arrive in a town just before the hour of service, and even though he had been riding all day and had had no food, he would conduct the service first and then take care of the needs of his body. It is said that in his entire ministry he missed but two appointments, and that many a time to keep appointments, he made the journey from Bellefonte to Philipsburg through blinding snowstorms.

For thirteen years he labored here in Bellefonte but finally had to resign because of his continued ill health. He was followed by the Rev. Messrs. Fields, Laverty and McGann. Under the leaderhip of these three rectors plans were made and the present church building was erected in 1871 and consecrated on June 1, 1872. It was during the rectorship of the Rev. Mr. Laverty that work was begun at the "Agricultural College," now Pennsylvania State College, and every rector of St. John's carried on the work until 1911 when, under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Hewitt, the work was made a state-wide project and the Rev. Canon Frear came as the first rector of St. Andrew's Church.

But the Century of Christian Progress which we have enjoyed is not built up of the history and records of the nineteen various rectors of this parish in the past hundred years. Each rector contributed something to the life of the parish, but the history of our progress could not be written without the help and co-operation of the parishioners who have made up this parish since the day of its first service. While the names of all the members are recorded on the pages of the old parish registers, there are few today who remember them. Of the nine original vestrymen, I think there are in Bellefonte today descendants of but two of them. Their names may be forgotten, but their good deeds live after them, and it is meet and proper that we honor them today. We will never know the names of the men and women who contributed for the ordinary expenses and upkeep of this parish during these many years. The names of those who contributed and worked to build the first church, the present church and the parish house have passed on into history. A few names are enshrined within the church for their names are attached to various articles of church furniture and ornaments, but these few of whom we have record and those of whom we have no record deserve our praise and honor, and it is right for us to acknowledge the debt we owe them for this beautiful church property today.

We have a glorious heritage—and if we are honest with ourselves we will admit that we have a still more glorious future. The past has gone and we are enjoying the fruits of the labors of those who have gone before us, but ahead of us are countless generations who in the coming years will worship here, and our task is to help them. We can profit by the past, but we can guide and help the future generations.

So today we meet to praise the men and women of this parish who brought to us a Century of Christian Progress. We acknowledge the debt we owe to them for their unfailing service and loyalty to Our Lord and His Church, and now is the time to set our course so that we can leave for the coming generations a still better and greater church, and perhaps pave the way for a still greater second century of Christian Progress here at St. John's.

Let us begin the new century then, with the first purpose to make this church a greater House of Prayer. This we can do if we strive to make a place in our lives for God and His Glorious Son, and to show by our example and precept the fruitfulness of such a life. And shall we not try to leave the church property in a better condition than it was when we were given the use of it? Can we not leave it in good repair and free from debt? We have done much to restore the property in the last few years, but there are many more things to be done. Not so many years ago the theory was held that the way to build up a church was to keep it in debt. Fortunately we have seen the errors in our ways and today we realize that the best way to build up a church is not to hinder the future generations with a large debt, but to help provide for greater work in the future. A number of years ago the Cathedral in Buffalo, N. Y., was facing a difficult financial crisis. To keep up the old work and to help provide for the future, every parishioner solemnly pledged to leave something to the church in his will. During the past twenty years the Cathedral has received many bequests ranging from one dollar to one hundred thousand dollars—for each man gave as he was able—and today the Cathedral in Buffalo is able to carry on greater work for the glory of God and for the advancement of the church because of the foresight of the past generation.

Let us honor, then, the past generations as is our bounden duty, let us work and pray and give for the strengthening of the present task before us, and can not each of us leave some amount of money in our wills for the help and support of the future generations of Christians who will worship here in the centuries to come.

# A Short History

OF

# St. John's Episcopal Church

## Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

(By the REV. ROBERT J. SUDLOW, Rector)

On August 11, 1837, the Rev. George Washington Natt, a deacon, came to Bellefonte to become the first rector of the Parish, and with his coming he ushered in "A Century of Christian Progress" for St. John's.

In 1825 the Rev. Robert Piggott, rector of St. Mark's in Lewistown, heard that several Episcopal families had moved to Bellefonte from York and came over to hold services. These services were held in the upper room over Armour's cabinet shop and were so well attended that arrangements were made to hold them at stated times. Three years later a missionary of "The Society for the Advancement of Christianity in the State of Pennsylvania," the Rev. John T .Adderly, was sent to take care of the work in Philipsburg, Bellefonte and Huntingdon; and for the next seven years various missionaries of the Society continued to hold regular services in Bellefonte. The Church grew and prospered. Then an attempt was made to organize the mission into a parish in 1834. This attempt did not succeed, but its failure led to the calling of the Rev. George Washington Natt, who had been ordained a Deacon in June, 1837, to become the first rector of the Parish.

With the new rector came the beginning of "A Century of Christian Prorgess." Within a year a church was built on High street, called in those days "Jail Hill," and within two years the Parish was admitted into union with the Diocese of Pennsylvania. But the rector's activities were not confined only to the work in Bellefonte. Dr. Natt made regular visits to Lock Haven, and so organized the work there, that within a few years St. Paul's Parish was established. Records show that he travelled in many parts of Central Pennsylvania, holding services in no fewer than eight Churches in the Diocese of Harrisburg. But the rigors of missionary life sapped the strength of Dr. Natt and after 13 years of labor he was forced to resign because of ill health.

The next noteworthy rector was "that genial Irishman," the Rev. Jas. C. Laverty, who came to Bellefonte in 1863. He followed the Rev. George G. Field who had built up the congregation and made repairs and improvements to the physical church. One of the improvements was an arrangement to light the Church with gas, another the installation of a handsome chandelier, "which action elicited Episcopal comment." The Rev. Mr. Laverty closely identified himself with the work at the "Agricultural College", now Pennsylvania State College, and because of his interest in the work, other rectors continued to hold services regularly at State College. During Mr. Laverty's rectorship plans were formulated for the building of a new church. By January, 1864, he reported to the Vestry that over $7,000 had been collected for that purpose. Plans were made for the erection of a stone church to cost about $15,000 and the old frame church was sold to the Lutheran congregation for $4,500. But before the work on the new church was commenced ill health caused Mr. Laverty to resign.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid by Bishop Stevens on April 22, 1869, during the rectorship of the Rev. Byron McGann. The building cost more than was first planned, so there was a delay in the opening of the new church (the present building) until Easter Day, 1871. The church which cost $20,000 was consecrated by Bishop Howe on June 7, 1872. The preacher was the Rev. James Laverty, who had been the Rector of St. John's when the plans for the new church were first formulated.

In 1877 the Rev. John Hewitt, who for many years had been doing noteworthy work in the Diocese, was called to the Rectorship. Because of the need of a Rectory, Major W. F. Reynolds built, at his own expense, the present rectory and, as a thank offering, presented it to the Parish on Thanksgiving Day, 1877. Many improvements were made to the church fabric during Father Hewitt's rectorship. The minutes of the vestry meetings record two amusing incidents: In 1884 the women of the parish asked permission of the vestry to install steam heat in the church. This was readily granted. In the same year, 1884, "The Edison Electric Illuminating Company" built their second electric plant in the state at Bellefonte and proposed to install electric lights in the church for the sum of $40.00. At first the vestry tabled the proposition, but at the insistence of two vestrymen it was again brought up for discussion and the following motion was passed: "W. S. Zeller and E. Garman were permitted to introduce electric lights into the church at their own cost and risk."

Under the leadership of the Rev. George Israel Browne, 1898-1906, not only the Bellefonte parish grew rapidly, but the work at State College was hastened. All previous rectors had conducted services at State College at frequent intervals, but Dr. Browne secured several of the professors at the College to act as lay-readers on Sundays when he could not be there, with the result that St. Andrew's mission prospered. When Dr. Browne resigned in 1906 to become the rector of St. John's Church, Lancaster, the vestry received a petition signed by a majority of the members of the Parish asking that the Rev. John Hewitt, a former rector, be recalled as Rector of the Parish. This was done and the Rev. Mr. Hewitt assumed the rectorship of St. John's in 1908.

A year before Mr. Hewitt's arrival the parish house was built and the need of repairs to the rest of the church property was great. Before he assumed the rectorship the women remodeled the rectory, and soon after he arrived plans were made for making the many repairs and improvements to the church property. In all some $6,000 worth of repairs, improvements and ornaments were added to the church property during his first year.

However, the most noteworthy contribution of Mr. Hewitt's second rectorship was in making the work at State College a statewide, instead of a diocesan, mission. He persuaded all the dioceses of the state to assume a portion of the work and this resulted in 1911 in calling Canon E. M. Frear to St. Andrew's Church, State College, where he has had an almost continuous rectorship.

During the past hundred years St. John's church has had but 19 rectors. One of the communicants living today was baptized when an infant by the first rector, George Washington Natt. Another of its communicants, Col. W. Fred Reynolds, recently completed his fifty-third year as a vestryman of the parish. Two years ago the present vestry began work to prepare for the Centennial Celebration and since that time more than $2,000 worth of repairs and improvements have been made to the church, the parish house and the rectory.

A detailed history of the parish was written by the Rev. Stuart F. Gast, a former rector, in 1934.

# Memorials In St. John's Church

| MEMORIAL | GIVEN IN MEMORY OF |
|---|---|
| Altar | Margery Gregg Reynolds and her five children Sister of Gov. Curtin |
| Reredos | The Rev. George Godfry Fields. |
| Chalices, Patens & Flagon | Mary V. Hale |
| Altar Cross | M. M. Reynolds ary magdalene, mother of Major |
| Eucharistic Candlesticks | George W. & Janet M. Jackson |
| Seven-branched Candlesticks | Joseph Lingle Montgomery |
| Altar Desk | Eleanor Kerr Neilson Seibert |
| Missal | George Fairlamb Harris |
| Private Communion Set | Edward Hedley Richard |
| Altar Vases | M. M. Reynolds mary magdalene |
| Altar Vases | Minerva J. Wilkinson |
| Credence Table | Bess E. Lingle |
| Large Ciborium | Joseph Lingle Montgomery |
| Small Ciborium | Wendell Whiteman Montgomery |
| Lavabo Bowl | E. C. K. |
| Bishop's Chair | Benjamin Bradley |
| Altar Rail | George N. Hale |
| Processional Cross | Valentine Family |
| Processional Torches | Delinda Harvey & Sarah Elizabeth Benner |
| Organ | Major Wm. F. Reynolds, given by the Col. |
| Pulpit | Louisa Garman |
| Lecturn | Jane W. Hale |
| Prayer Desk | Mrs. Adam Hoy |
| Litany Desk | Montgomery Family |

| | |
|---|---|
| Rood Screen | James Andrew & Margaret Aull, Frederic Constant & Isabella Hedley Richard |
| Silver Alms Basons | Mary V. Hale |
| East Window | James C. Hale |
| West Window | James Burnside |
| Nave Window | Adeline Miles Harris |
| Baptismal Font | The Rev. Horatio H. Hewitt |
| Baptismal Ewer | S. Austin & Margaret Thomas Brew |
| Hymn Boards | John Armstrong |
| Alms Box | Marian Wallace Petriken |
| Bronze Tablet | Edward and Mary L. Graham |
| Marble Tablet | The Rev. G. W. Natt |

# Contributions for the Endowment Fund

| | |
|---|---|
| June 24, 1901—Miss Marian Petriken | $ 100.00 |
| March 5, 1917—Mrs. Rebecca E. Bartley | 100.00 |
| Dec. 20, 1919—Mrs. Ellen Hale Stone | 500.00 |
| Nov. 20, 1920—Mrs. Thomazine Lane | 500.00 |
| Aug. 10, 1925—Mary Valentine Hale Fund | 1200.00 |
| Dec. 21, 1927—Mrs. J. L. Montgomery Fund | 100.00 |
| Income reinvested | 775.00 |
| | $3275.00 |

# Special Gifts To St. John's

1877—The Rectory, a gift of Major William F. Reynolds.

1916—A Processional Cross, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Richard.

1927—$100 from Mrs. Martha M. Norris.

1929—$200 from Colonel W. Fred Reynolds for the repairing of the Church steeple.

1930—Eight Nave Lanterns, a gift of Mrs. Edward H. Richard.

1931—$500 bequest of Margaret McManus.

1933—The Crypt Chapel, a gift of the friends of Charles Montgomery Bullock.

1933—$1000 from five heirs of the late Miss Caroline Valentine.

1934—$100 bequest of Miss Lydea Jackson.

1935—$200 bequest of Mrs. Sarah Burnside Valentine.

1936—Two glass cruets, a gift of Mrs. Edward Richard.

# Rectors of St. John's Church

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Reverend George Washington Natt | August 11, 1837—Oct. 1, 1850 | |
| The Reverend George H. Walsh | Dec. 1, 1851—June 18, 1853 | |
| The Reverend James L. Hildebrand | 1854—1857 | |
| The Reverend George G. Field | Mar. 19, 1857—Oct. 1, 1862 | |
| The Reverend James C. Laverty | June 15, 1863—July 13, 1868 | |
| The Reverend Byron McGann | Aug. 1, 1868—April 20, 1870 | |
| The Reverend Henry J. W. Allen | Oct. 3, 1870—April 2, 1877 | |
| The Reverend John Hewitt | Aug. 22, 1877—May 1, 1885 | |
| The Reverend John R. R. Robinson | Sept. 16, 1885—May 20, 1886 | |
| The Reverend James Oswald Davis | Oct. 3, 1886—July 1, 1891 | |
| The Reverend Wm. DeLancey Benton | Sept. 21, 1891—May 7, 1893 | |
| The Reverend Robert Erskine Wright | Aug. 16, 1893—Jan. 15, 1898 | |
| The Reverend George Israel Browne | July 3, 1898—Feb. 9, 1906 | Anna |
| The Reverend Edwin G. Richardson | Aug. 15, 1906—Oct. 1, 1907 | |
| The Reverend John Hewitt | Feb. 2, 1908—May 15, 1914 | Ada |
| The Reverend William C. Charlton | June 21, 1914—June 1, 1916 | |
| The Reverend Malcolm DePui Maynard | Oct. 8, 1916—Feb. 2, 1925 | |
| The Reverend Alex J. Kilpatrick | May 1, 1926—June 30, 1927 | |
| The Reverend Stuart F. Gast | June 20, 1928—Aug. 31, 1934 | |
| The Reverend Robert James Sudlow | Oct. 1, 1934— | |
| " Samuel H. Sayre | 1936 | |
| " Warren G. Newman | 1938 | |
| " Herbert Koepp-Baker | 1939 | |
| " Robert H. Thomas | 1940 | |
| " Francis P. Davis | 1942 | |
| " Vernon A. Weaver | 1944 | |
| " A. Whitney Church | 1945 | |
| " Charles Clarence Reimer | 1949-1963 | |

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